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CONCERN EXPRESSED OVER USE OF JOURNALISTS AS CIA AGENTS

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) - THE AMERICAN SOCIETY OF NEWSPAPER EDITORS HAS TOLD PRESIDENT CARTER IT IS CONCERNED ABOUT THE U.S. GOVERNMENT'S POLICY ON THE USE OF U.S. NEWSPAPER CORRESPONDENTS AS AGENTS FOR THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY.

"WE ARE GRAVELY CONCERNED OVER THE POSITION THAT YOU AND YOUR DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE HAVE TAKEN ON THE USE OF AMERICAN JOURNALISTS BY THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY," SAID THOMAS WINSHIP, EDITOR OF THE BOSTON GLOBE AND ASNE PRESIDENT; AND CHARLES W. BAILEY, EDITOR OF THE MINNEAPOLIS TRIBUNE AND PRESIDENT OF THE ASNE'S FREEDOM OF INFORMATION COMMITTEE, IN AN APRIL 18 LETTER TO CARTER.

WINSHIP AND BAILEY SAID THEY WERE REFERRING SPECIFICALLY TO REMARKS MADE BY ADM. STANSFIELD TURNER BEFORE THE ASNE CONVENTION AND TO CARTER'S COMMENTS IN A MEETING WITH A GROUP OF EDITORS, AS RECORDED IN A WHITE HOUSE TRANSCRIPT RELEASED APRIL 12.

THE WHITE HOUSE HAS NOT RESPONDED TO THE LETTER.

TURNER TOLD ASNE MEMBERS ON APRIL 10 THAT ON THREE OCCASIONS HE APPROVED THE USE OF FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS IN CIA OPERATIONS. HOWEVER, TURNER SAID, IN EACH CASE THE PLANS DID NOT MATERIALIZE AND THE JOURNALISTS WERE NOT USED.

CARTER SAID THE FOLLOWING DAY IN A QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION WITH EDITORS THAT ONLY IN EXTREME CASES WOULD AMERICAN CORRESPONDENTS BE USED IN CIA OPERATIONS.

WINSHIP AND BAILEY SAID ASNE EDITORS, WHO REPRESENT MOST OF THE NATION'S 1,750 DAILY NEWSPAPERS, AGREE WITH THE VIEW TAKEN BY R.M. ROSENTHAL, EDITOR OF THE NEW YORK TIMES.

ROSENTHAL WROTE:

"WE SEND CORRESPONDENTS ABROAD AS CORRESPONDENTS, NOT AS AGENTS. THEY ASK THEIR HOST COUNTRIES TO TRUST THEM; TO GIVE THEM SPECIAL ACCESS; TO ALLOW THEM TO TRAVEL ABOUT; AND TO ENJOY THE PRIVILEGES OF A CORRESPONDENT WHOSE ONLY JOB IS TO GATHER THE NEWS.

"IF IT'S THE POLICY OF THE U.S. GOVERNMENT TO DECIDE THAT IT CAN ON OCCASION USE A FOREIGN CORRESPONDENT (AS A CIA AGENT); EVERY AMERICAN CORRESPONDENT ABROAD IMMEDIATELY BECOMES SUSPECT.

"WHY SHOULD ANY GOVERNMENT TRUST ANY AMERICAN CORRESPONDENT UNDER THOSE CIRCUMSTANCES? ADMIRAL TURNER SAYS HE PLANNED ON THREE OCCASIONS TO USE CORRESPONDENTS. 'WHY BELIEVE HIM?' WOULD BE THE NATURAL REACTION OF ANY FOREIGN GOVERNMENT: 'WHY NOT 300?'